

THE PARISH MESSENGER

A PERSONAL VISITOR TO THE PARISHES

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA - DECEMBER 1960

The Most Important Gift

If you want to see your Christmas list complete, with just the right gift for each person, that will make him glow with joy, decide first on your gift for Jesus. It will not be something you can buy, something you can wrap up and hand to Him. No, it will be part of yourself—your dreams which you give Him, to refine and reshape; your mind that you give Him to use; your tongue you put at His command, to speak only truth and compassion; your hands that you put at His service, to work for blessing and kindness.

If you want to please Him specially, you will give Him something you have held tight for yourself—your spare time, your marriage, your work. You will put into His hands, to use as He will, these treasures you have regarded as your own, and let Him use them for the delight and happiness of others.

And, if you would make a really lavish gift, as lavish as the Cross itself, you will give Him yourself, all of you, to be at His command; gladly surrendered, for His glory and the happiness of those about you. And then your Christmas list will be simple — for His love will take possession of your emptied self, and He will guide you to gifts that bless because He chooses them—

—Allen Clark in "Home Prayers"

Pastor Ill

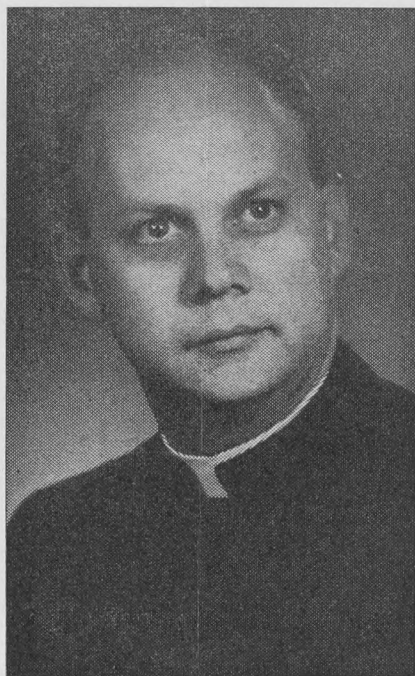
The Rev. E. S. Brynjolfsson, pastor of Icelandic Lutheran Church in Vancouver, B.C., is ill and has been in the hospital for the past few weeks. It is hoped that he can return to his home before Christmas.

The president of Synod requested all congregations of Synod to observe a special period of prayer for his recovery at services on Sunday, December 4th. Daily prayers for Pastor Brynjolfsson are also kindly requested.

Addition Dedicated

First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, dedicated an addition to its present building at the morning service on November 20th. The new building provides five additional rooms, which will be used for offices and classes. A house and lot, adjacent to the church property, was purchased last August to provide more land for a proposed parish hall. The addition is the first phase of the new building program.

The service of dedication commenced with a processional in which members of the Board of Trustees, Board of Deacons, Building Committee, and the youth organizations took part. Special music was rendered by the choir, and Miss Heather Sigurdson sang a solo. The Pastor, the Rev. V. J. Eylands, D.D., preached a sermon based on Isaiah 51: 1-3, "Remember the rock from which you are hewn, and trust in God."



President Resigns

The Rev. Eric H. Sigmar, president of synod for the past three and a half years, has resigned as pastor of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in St. James and accepted a call to Zion Lutheran Church in Camas, Washington. The Rev. V. J. Eylands, a former president of the synod who is currently vice-president, will assume the duties of synod president on January 1, 1961.

Pastor Sigmar was born and raised in the Icelandic Synod and has spent his entire ministry in it (Glenboro, Calvary, Seattle, and St. Stephen's). He has also served as Secretary of Synod, as editor of the "Parish Messenger," and in many other capacities.

A Message of Farewell

Leaving friends is always difficult. In a few weeks Svava and I with our three children will be leaving our friends of the Icelandic Synod to begin a new ministry at Zion Lutheran Church in Camas, Washington. Much as we look forward to our new life and work, it is difficult to pull up roots that are deep, and to leave our many friends in our beloved synod. We will miss the warm fellowship we have known among the people of our synod, and we will miss familiar scenes, and places, and events.

But we will be serving the same Lord and we will be serving in the same Church — our great United Lutheran Church in America. The congregation to which we have been called is a member of the Pacific Synod, a sister synod of our Icelandic Synod in the ULCA. It is a congregation of over one thousand baptised members in the small city of Camas situated on the Columbia River just a few miles northeast of the metropolis of Portland, Oregon. We will have the joy of living only about fifty miles from my parents, Dr. and Mrs. Haraldur Sigmar, in Kelso, Wash., and only 15 miles from Vancouver, Wash., where my brother, Pastor Harold lives and works.

The last few years we have heard much about the "merger" which will create a new Lutheran Church body in 1962. This is a merger of our United Lutheran Church with three other major church bodies of Lutherans in North America. All of these general bodies have now voted overwhelmingly for the merger which will form a new Church to be called "Lutheran Church in America." Next summer at the conventions of the 32 synods of the ULCA each synod will vote for or against their approval of this merger. If two-thirds of the synods vote in favor the way will be open for a "Constituting Convention" for the new Church in 1962. The new Church will have 30 geographic synods, three in Canada and 27 in the USA. Congregations presently in the Icelandic Synod, should the synod vote for the merger, would become members of five of the new geographic synods, with each synod large enough in membership to maintain two full-time administrative officers.

In previous issues of the "Parish Messenger" I have discussed the details of this matter at length, as I also did in my president's report at our last convention. May I repeat my sincere and carefully-thought-out conviction that the wisest and best course for our synod is to vote also for the merger and to become a part of it. It is difficult to break the ties of the past. But let us remember that the Bylaws of the new Church calls for the possible formation of "special interest conferences for groups with a national and cultural heritage." Therefore our natural course of action would be to establish an "Icelandic Lutheran Conference."

Such a conference would provide the necessary tie for congregations and churchmen of Icelandic Synod background. It would mean that many pastors and laymen who have not been a part of the Icelandic Synod for years, could become members of such a proposed Conference.

So as I say farewell to you, my beloved friends of the Icelandic Synod, it is not a farewell with a sad note of finality. Because I hope I will be re-united again with you through the medium of an "Icelandic Lutheran Conference" of the Lutheran Church in America!

God bless you one and all! Thanks for the wonderful associations of the past and for your friendship and fellowship in the Lord. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you," and I look forward to the new associations of the future.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Pastor Eric H. Sigmar.

Langruth Parsonage



The picture at left shows the new Langruth parsonage which was purchased in late September. After the purchase, which 'was financed by member's contributions and a loan from the Board of American Missions of the United Lutheran Church, there was some remodelling and modern plumbing was installed. The Rev. Ingthor Indridason is pastor.

Evangelism Program

The Zone Plan of the Evangelism Program was officially launched at First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, on Sunday, November 27th, at the morning service when the Chairman, Regional Directors and Zone Leaders were commissioned. Through the Zone Plan visitation will be carried out within the framework of a complete parish organization. The geographical areas in which members reside have been divided into zones with a leader, whose duty it is to encourage regular attendance at worship services, Sunday school, and to widen the base of participation in the various programs of the school.

Luther League

Sixty-three teenagers attended the Viking Luther League Fall Rally at First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg on October 8th. The young people came from eight leagues — the largest delegation being from Riverton where a school bus was utilized. The theme of the rally was "Living for Jesus," and the main speaker was the Rev. Lorne Nadiger of Gimli.

The annual convention of the Viking Luther League is scheduled for Mountain, North Dakota, in May.

Teachers' Rally

A rally for Sunday school teachers was held at First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, on Saturday, October 22nd, with teachers from eight parishes participating. High point of the all day workshop was the guided tour of Palestine by way of slides and commentary by Dr. V. J. Eylands who toured the Holy Land last summer. Also included were departmental conferences, a filmstrip, addresses, and an introduction to up-to-date literature. The theme was: "Planned for Everyone."

U. L. C. A. Convention

The Icelandic Synod was represented at the recent United Lutheran Church in America convention at Atlantic City by the Rev. O. Donald Olsen (Glenboro), the Rev. Norman Nelson (Seattle), Arni Josephson (Glenboro), and Dr. Frank Scribner (Gimli). The Synod president, the Rev. Eric H. Sigmar, declined to go after accepting a Call to another synod and Pastor Nelson went in his place.

PASTOR OLSON has given us his impressions of the convention in the following report:

"The primary impression I have after attending the U.L.C.A. convention as a delegate of our Icelandic Synod is that we, as a Church, are blessed with exceptional leaders. Beginning with Dr. Fry, acknowledged around the world as 'Mr. Protestant', and continuing with Dr. Reinartz, the Secretary, Dr. Wagner, the Treasurer, and the staff members of the Boards and Agencies of the Church one is soon made aware that here is not only deep dedication to the cause of Christ, but also ability in large measure. Take, for example, one of the activities of the Press, Radio, and Television Department. They showed one of their TV cartoons which is exceptionally well done, high in interest value, with a spiritual message which will reach both children and adults.

"All of the reports of the convention were of interest to us. However, necessarily, some parts were of greater importance than others.

"The first highlight was the report on the proposed merger of the U.L.C.A. with three other Lutheran Churches. The delegates were reminded that the major question was: 'What is the will of God for us in this decision?' Too often we are tempted to put the question of our own personal desire first. After a number of clarifying questions by delegates, a resounding, and unanimous, vote of approval was recorded. This means that the question of Church Merger will come before the spring Synod Conventions, and when two-thirds of these conventions vote in favor, the merger will automatically come into effect on January 1, 1963.

"A second exciting moment was the announcement that one of our laymen, Mr. Neil O. Bardal of St. Stephen's, St. James, had been elected to the Executive Board of the Luthran Laymen's Movement.

"Of the reports of the Boards and Agencies of the Church two stand out. First was the report of the Board of Foreign Missions which opened with a sign proclaiming the theme 'Into All the World Together.' Then the curtains opened revealing some sixty people from different parts of the world. Some of them wore the dress that is common in their lands. There were missionaries from India, British Guiana, Japan, Liberia, and Malaya. There were also nationals from each of these countries as well as from Argentina and Chile. The report pointed out that our work now is to help indigenous churches (independent churches led by leaders from their own countries). The Board pointed out great needs and opportunities which are open to us NOW if we have the means to carry the work forward. It was a moving moment when one of the leaders said: 'It is a terrible thing to stand before a great need with empty hands.'

"The other outstanding report was that of the Board of American Missions. This Board is responsible for establishing new congregations in the new communities that are springing up all over North America, and

with assisting the work of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ where the need is great and the resources are small. In part I quote from the report of this Board:

The reason for Home Mission activity is not brought about by the desires of the Board or by the Church. The motivating force is found in the Great Commission of our Lord ("Go ye into all the world making disciples"). One does not have a choice. It is either — or. The Church is under ORDERS. The Board of American Missions is under ORDERS as the agency of the Church to carry out our Lord's command at home . . . 'and the field is white to harvest.' . . . The sole purpose of the Home Mission program is to carry out the command of our Lord to people. Though the Board is concerned about surveys and organizations, dollars and buildings, parsonages and lots, costs per cubic feet and mortgages, it is concerned about these because they are related to its purpose, planting the Church, reaching souls for Christ, confronting men and women with the Gospel in the communities in which they live. All the material aspects of the Board's Program are related to its mission and we must look through these to see people for whom we pray, labor and serve, people who are living in the United States, its possessions and Canada.

"The Board led in the establishment of 132 congregations in the last two years. Opportunities remain all over North America for the establishment of congregations, particularly on the West Coast and in Canada. Yet, in a kind of desperate plea, the Board pointed out a lack of support through giving by Synods, congregations, and thus individuals. And unless there is a great surge of support immediately, the work will have to be curtailed when it should be increased.

"To sum up the total effect of this convention upon your four Icelandic Synod delegates I would say that we felt it was time for our Icelandic Synod and its people to rededicate themselves to the cause of Christ, and to take up our cross and follow Him in terms of increasing our giving to His Church. Dr. Houser of the Board of American Missions pointed out that those dollars represent dying souls who will find life in Jesus Christ through Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and every phase of the Work of the Church."

The Rev. O. Donald Olsen,
Secretary of Synod.

From the services in which I joined as a child I have taken with me into life a feeling for what is solemn, and a need for quiet and self-recollection, without which I cannot realize the meaning of my life. I cannot, therefore, support the opinion of those who would not let children take part in grown-up people's services till they, to some extent, understand them. The important thing is not that they shall understand, but that they shall feel something of what is serious and solemn. The fact that the child sees his elders full of devotion, and has to feel something of their devotion himself — that is what gives the service its meaning for him.

—Albert Schweitzer.

Benevolence Receipts

(11 Months)

The synodical treasurer, Oscar Bjorklund, reports the following receipts through November 28, 1960. It is disheartening to note that our Synod, after eleven months, has reached only one-third of its minimum goal for the world-wide work of the Church.

| | 1960 Apportionment | Receipts | % | Lutheran World Action |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| First, Winnipeg | \$ 4,428.60 | \$2,007.63 | 45.3 | \$ 29.35 |
| Selkirk | 2,983.20 | 407.33 | 13.6 | 101.00 |
| Gimli | 1,801.80 | 812.00 | 45.1 | 19.00 |
| Icelandic, Vancouver | 1,762.20 | 300.00 | 17.0 | 25.00 |
| Calvary, Seattle | 1,683.00 | 1,212.14 | 72.0 | 211.96 |
| Braethra, Riverton | 1,683.00 | 127.42 | 7.6 | 36.60 |
| Ardal, Arborg | 1,537.80 | 766.65 | 49.9 | 111.51 |
| Lundar | 1,234.20 | 96.12 | 7.8 | |
| Vikur, Mountain | 1,089.00 | 148.45 | 13.6 | 61.59 |
| St. Stephen's, St. James | 1,075.80 | 1,067.20 | 99.2 | 117.35 |
| St. Paul's, Minneota | 1,062.60 | 615.45 | 57.9 | 261.58 |
| Herthubreith, Langruth | 930.60 | 199.40 | 21.4 | |
| St. Peter's, Svold | 818.40 | 240.35 | 29.4 | 38.40 |
| Vidalins, Hensel | 666.60 | 119.45 | 17.9 | 27.30 |
| Geysir | 646.80 | 111.15 | 17.2 | 8.90 |
| Breithvikur, Hnausa | 640.20 | | | |
| Concordia, Churchbridge | 613.80 | | | |
| Mikleijar, Hecla | 521.40 | | | |
| Glenboro | 481.80 | 267.15 | 55.4 | 70.47 |
| Arnes | 435.60 | 21.00 | 4.8 | 20.00 |
| Immanuel, Baldur | 429.00 | 201.60 | 47.0 | 71.62 |
| Frikirkju, Bru | 429.00 | 266.60 | 62.1 | 23.60 |
| Fjalla, Milton | 422.40 | | | 20.00 |
| Vidir | 402.60 | 21.70 | 5.3 | |
| Betel, Silver Bay | 290.40 | | | |
| Lincoln, Taunton | 290.40 | 139.65 | 48.1 | 15.00 |
| Gudbrands, Morden | 283.80 | | | |
| Hallson | 270.60 | | | |
| Vidines, Husavick | 270.60 | 25.00 | 9.2 | 25.00 |
| Trinity, Pt. Roberts | 178.20 | 178.20 | 100.0 | 63.00 |
| Frelsis, Grund | 112.20 | 41.60 | 37.0 | 13.57 |
| Gardar | | 78.05 | | |
| Trinity, Camper | | 15.00 | | 15.00 |
| Foam Lake, Saskatchewan | | 500.00 | | |
| Viking Luther League | | | | 113.38 |
| Sundry | | 9.00 | | 10.00 |
| | <u>\$29,475.60</u> | <u>\$9,995.29</u> | <u>33.8</u> | <u>\$1,510.98</u> |

News Flashes

Construction of the first unit of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in St. James is almost completed. First service in the new church is scheduled for Christmas day.

Construction of the two additions to the Arborg church is also expected to be completed by Christmas. A pastor's study, enlarged kitchen, lavatories, two large parish activity rooms, and modern plumbing are included.

Two hundred people attended the Congregational dinner at Langruth Lutheran Church in preparation for the Every-Member-Visit. The dinner was held on November 9th, and was a part of the Stewardship Plan in which the congregation had been engaged for several weeks. Guest speaker was Synod Secretary, Pastor O. Donald Olsen.

The Rev. Donald R. Johnson, recently ordained in Minneapolis in an Augustana Lutheran Church, was installed as pastor of the Minneota Parish, Minnesota, at a special service on November 21st. Installing officer for the Synod was Secretary O. Donald Olsen. Also participating in the service was the former pastor, the Rev. Wallace Bergman.

First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, observed Diploma Sunday in the Sunday school on November 13th. Thirty-one pupils were recognized for perfect attendance during the past year. Eleven pupils have had perfect attendance for more than five years, and one has had perfect attendance for twelve years! Can any of our other schools beat that?

St. Stephen's congregation in St. James has called the Rev. Garfield Remus of Edmonton, Alberta, to be their next pastor. He has received the call and is considering it. He is a native of Ontario, and a graduate of Northwestern Seminary in Minneapolis!

"NO ROOM"

No Room. They are the most heart-rending words in the Bible. No room. Would you have said that, Don't you say it, every day? Don't you say it to Christ when He asks you for your heart: "Go away and let me sleep. I've got no time for you, no room in my heart — I don't know you?" We're all inn-keepers, with room for everybody and everything but Him. Not many of us really let Him in.

I heard once about an old Scottish minister who used to go around knocking on the doors of his town and asking whoever answered the knock, "Does Jesus Christ live here?" People stared at him and told jokes about him. They thought he was crazy. But was he? Did those jokers wise-crack to cover up a guilty conscience?

—Roy Rogers,
in "My Favorite
Christmas Story."

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Lundar Lutheran Church has been remodelling its parsonage and modern plumbing has been installed. The Rev. Jon Bjarman is pastor.

A recent Lutheran World Relief meeting was advised that 1960 has been the biggest year for clothing and food shipments for destitute peoples. Pastors were asked to advise their people to be a bit more selective in the gathering of used clothing. Needed especially are men's and boys' clothing, and baby layettes.